(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Indian Railways have a well defined and detailed procedure for recruitment, with adequate and in-built checks and balances. The procedure has evolved over the years and has stood the test of time. It is well geared to meet the requirements of the system adequately, ensuring transparency, fairness and selection, strictly on merit. Details of recruitment to various posts made in different Railways in the last three years, shall be laid on the Table of the Sabha, as mentioned above.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

1240. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Horticulture Mission has become operational; and

(b) if so, the benefits achieved from the Mission so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation has launched the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) during 2005-06, for holistic development of horticulture sector, duly ensuring an end to end approach having backward and forward linkages covering production, post harvest management and marketing with the active involvement of all the stake holders. All the States and Union Territories are covered under the Mission except the eight North Eastern States including Sikkim and the States of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, which have been covered under another Mission namely, Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in the North Eastern States (TMNE). The achievements made under the Mission upto 2007-08 are as under:-

- 1710 new nurseries have been setup.
- An area of about 8.26 lakh ha has been brought under new plantation and an area of 1.2 lakh ha under old and senile plantation has been rejuvenated.
- Organic farming and Integrated Pest Management programme have been taken up in 0.76 lakh ha area and 4.0 lakh ha area respectively.
- Under the post harvest management component, 898 pack houses, 46 cold storages, 14 refrigerated vans, 7 whole sale markets and 45 rural markets have been assisted.

Damage to crops due to rains

1241. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether rains in the months of May-June have damaged the bumper wheat crop;

(b) if so, whether monsoon has been normal with the result that output of wheat and rice have fully improved; and

(c) if so, to what extent Government is confident of achieving the target set for the foodgrains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Need to introduce new System of Rice Intensification (SRI) to boost-rice production

1242. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the new System of Rice Intensification (SRI) used in Tamil Nadu supported by World Bank Project which sharply cut the use of water by 32 per cent and increases yields up to 40 to 80 per cent per hectare than conventional rice cultivation; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to introduce the system in other parts of the country in order to boost rice production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) reportedly conserves water and enhances the productivity of rice. The field experiments conducted in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere in the country have indicated promising impact.

(b) In order to boost the rice production in the country, Government of India has introduced the SRI technique in other parts of the country for its popularization by organizing demonstrations under various crop production programmes such as Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Rice Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Rice) implemented through Macro Management Programme and National Food Security Mission-Rice (NFSM-Rice).

Incentives to farmers under new farm policy

1243. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:
Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that according to Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, sponsored by United Nations, agriculture has been neglected in South Asian Regions, particularly in India;

(b) if so, the initiatives Government has taken to give priority to agriculture in India;

(c) the incentives given to farmers under the new farm policy announced by Government;

(d) whether farmers have expressed reservations about the new farm policy; and

(e) if so, the reaction of Government thereto and the details of the new farm policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Government of India is aware of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The survey, *inter alia*, highlights the need for making agriculture sector economically and socially viable and for improving productivity in order to reduce poverty in the Asia and Pacific Region. Several steps have been taken by the Government of India for revitalization of the agriculture and allied sectors by